Welcome to Story Station U on 89-3 WGSU, Geneseo's Voice of the Valley, your local radio broadcast where campus life meets American headlines! I'm your host, Madilyn Becker, and I'll be breaking down the recent news that could change your weekend plans- or maybe your future!

If you're a student who needs a break after class-registration stress, or just need a break from work in general, sit down and enjoy some breaking news with me! Don't forget- you can follow along with tonight's show by finding my script and all of my sources online on WGSU's website! Find the programming schedule and click on Story Station U!

Let's get into our first story of the evening! President-elect Donald Trump has announced several of his cabinet picks for his second term as president. Notable picks include Matt Gaetz for Attorney General, Robert F Kennedy JR as head of Health and Human Services, Marco Rubio for Secretary of State, and Pete Hegseth as Defense Secretary. The president-elect has also announced his plans to create a ''Department of Government Efficiency" led by co-founder of Tesla and SpaceX, Elon Musk, and founder of the biotech company, Roivant Sciences, Vivek Ramaswamy. Donald Trump's cabinet picks have not come without controversy, but don't stress, I'm here to give you all the facts!

Starting off with the former president's pick for Attorney General: Matt Gaetz. The Attorney General serves as the chief legal officer of the states and territories of the U.S., including the District of Columbia. His powers include representing states and state agencies before state and federal courts, operation of victim compensation programs, and proposing legislation. Matt Gaetz, the Republican representative of Florida, graduated from the College of William and Mary Law School but has spent much of his career as a politician, rather than in law. His legal background is more limited than many Attorney Generals in the recent past. He also has a long history of supporting Donald Trump, especially at the end of his last term as president, when, in 2020, he spread false theories about the January 6th attack on the U.S. capitol and supported the president-elect's idea that the 2020 election results should not have been certified. However, much of the criticism towards Gaetz has stemmed from his accusations of sex trafficking and sexual misconduct. In 2020, the Florida representative was investigated by the Department of Justice, commonly referred to as the DOJ, for involvement in a sex trafficking scheme involving a 17 year old girl. This investigation was closed by the DOJ in 2023 without the department pressing charges. Officials blamed the lack of witness credibility for their failure to bring charges against Gaetz. However, in 2023, the House of Representative Ethics Committee announced their investigation into claims that Matt Gaetz had been involved with illicit drug use, as well as separate claims of sexual misconduct, including sharing inappropriate photos and videos to other lawmakers on the house floor. However, earlier this month, Gaetz resigned from Congress, making the Ethics Committee unable to continue their investigation. Republican senator John Cornyn of Texas has voiced his opinion that the committee's report should be available during Senate hearings to confirm Gaetz as Attorney General.

Moving onto Donald Trump's pick for head of Health and Human Services, he has named the former 2024 presidential candidate, Robert F Kennedy Jr to lead the The Department of Health and Human Services. This department is in charge of overseeing institutions such as the Center for Disease Control, The Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health. Kennedy has been a critic of vaccines in America, saying that the science of vaccine safety has ''huge deficits". He has expressed wanting to conduct more safety studies, saying that ''the pharmaceutical industry is not a trustworthy industry". Kennedy has also expressed his concerns over ''conflicts of interest'' in government health agencies, namely the National Institutes of Health. He has also publicly supported the claim that vaccines cause autism, which has been disputed by the Lancet Medical Journal. Additionally, He has expressed a strong aversion to ultra processed foods popular in the U.S., saying that they are ''driving the obesity epidemic". Kennedy has coined the slogan, Make America Healthy Again, seemingly a play on Donald Trump's well known campaign slogan, Make America Great Again.

PSA: 60: seconds

Up next on the list of notable candidate picks: Marco Rubio and Pete Hegseth for Secretary of State and Defense Secretary, respectively. Rubio, the Republican U.S. Senator for Florida, has explicitly stated his fear of foreign threats to the U.S. He currently serves as a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, aimed toward crafting ''aggressive policy on China," according to the New York Times. He has said that China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia are becoming increasingly threatening to the United States. The online newspaper, The Independent, claims that Donald Trump's pick of Marco Rubio as Secretary of States indicates that he will continue his agenda of aggression towards China. The Republican senator served as a co-chairman on the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China. Rubio has also expressed his desire to bring the conflict between Russia and Ukraine to ''a conclusion.'' During Donald Trump's first term as president, Rubio encouraged him to adopt harsh sanctions against Venezuela, with the goal of unseating their current, leftist president, Nicolas Maduro. Although the president remains in power, Venezuelans have suffered from U.S. imposed sanctions. Moving onto Pete Hegseth, the military veteran who Trump has named as his pick for Secretary of Defense. He served as an infantry officer in the Army National Guard. According to PBS News, Hegseth has taken some extreme-right stances during his political career, saying that the politically left are America's ''enemies'', and that America ''should not have women in combat roles".

Concluding our discussion of Donald Trump's notable cabinet picks, are Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. The president-elect has named the two controversial figures to lead the Department of Government Efficiency. This new agency has been proposed by Donald Trump to serve as ''an outside body to advise the White House", according to the Washington Post. It is proposed that the commission will work with the White House Office of Management and Budgeting to provide advice on how to cut government spending and recommendations for "large scale structural reform" within the government, as well as how to take a more ''entrepreneurial approach'' to government. Elon Musk, who is currently the World's Richest Person, has stated that he aims to cut federal spending by two-trillion dollars and cut the

number of federal agencies- currently over four-hundred- down to under one-hundred. Vivek Ramaswamy ran for president early in the 2024 presidential race. While running, he laid out plans to dismantle the FBI and other government agencies. According to NBC News, he called the FBI, Department of Education, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission ‘’redundant’’, as their functions ‘’are already performed elsewhere in the government”. His plans specifically for the FBI include to reallocate funds to the U.S. Secret Service, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. Donald Trump has said, in respect to the work that Musk and Ramaswamy are proposed to do, “they will work together to liberate our economy and make the U.S. government accountable to ‘We The People’’.

Let’s turn to our current president, Joe Biden. On November 17th, President Biden visited the Amazon Rainforest in Manaus, Brazil. He becomes the first ever sitting President to visit the area. While on his trip, he signed a proclamation declaring November 17th to be International Conservation Day, continuing his work on climate change. He said ‘’our forest and national wonders are the heart and soul of the world”. He went on to promise that the U.S. will spend millions of dollars to restore the Amazon’s land, plant its native tree species, and support biodiversity efforts. President Biden has long supported climate activism efforts, namely by investing in clean energy manufacturing in the U.S. SUNY Geneseo students, if you're interested in learning more about, and protecting our planet, check out our sustainability and geography club! They meet on Thursdays at 7:00pm in Bailey 215!

Let’s end tonight’s show with our weekly Good News Moment! Tonight’s moment of good news is the story of how a U.S. veteran turned his own suffering into a passion project for him to help other veterans. Veteran Peter Scott told his story to ABC News. Scott returned to his home in Maryland after twelve years of serving as a counterintelligence agent in Afghanistan and Iraq. He then entered treatment for his PTSD and met other veterans who were suffering from food insecurity. He used his newfound passion for gardening to launch Feilds4Valor. The project uses local farming to aid veterans living with food insecurity in the D.C. metropolitan area. According to the Military Family Advisory Network, 1-in-5 active duty and veteran families experience food insecurity. Scott says “I don’t think our veterans have earned that. They deserve better”. His garden produces fresh vegetables, eggs, and honey, and he estimated that this year approximately 300 volunteers helped out on the farm. Americans are able to help Scott in his mission, even if they are unable to volunteer, by donating to his project on Fields4valor.org.

Thank you for listening to Story Station U! Stay informed, go impress your friends with all your new knowledge, and tune in next Tuesday, same place, same time for your top headlines! I’m your host, Madilyn Becker, and I wish everyone an amazing rest of your week!